Racist Utterances as Quasi-fictional:

Rethinking Habermas's Theory of Strategic and Dramaturgical Actions

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In this paper, I argue that from the standpoint of Habermas's theory of communication, racist utterances can be regarded as a kind of fictional utterance. This is because both are utterances in which the main purpose is the realization of the perlocutionary effect, while they do not have illocutionary acts as normal utterances. It is clear, however, that reducing racist speech to fiction is inappropriate and misdirected. Fiction is still communicative in the sense Habermas means, whereas racist utterances are essentially strategic action, and fundamentally different in that respect. However, I argue that racist utterances are similar to fiction because they are disguised as communicative action, and in that sense, can be regarded as quasi-fictional utterances. As a clue to developing this argument, this paper will examine Searle's theory of fiction. Following Habermas's framework of communication theory, fiction seems at first glance to be an utterance that should belong to dramaturgical action. However, because the element of role-playing is rare in expressive speech acts as dramaturgical action, fiction in the sense that Searle refers to has no proper place in Habermas's theory of communication. Therefore, at the end of this paper, I propose a solution, albeit a hypothetical one, that posits a new type of utterance within the framework of the theory of communicative action and paves the way for further critical consideration of racist utterances. The discussion in this paper proceeds as follows. First, I will review the introduction of the position of strategic acts in Habermas's theory of communicative action and its modification by Habermas himself, returning to Austin's theory of speech act as well. Next, I will attempt to connect with Searle's theory of fiction, which focuses on the pretention of illocutionary acts, by illustrating several actual racist utterances as strategic action. I will then rethink Habermas's theory of dramaturgical action, argue that this category is incompatible with the type of fictionality that is the subject matter at hand, and suggest a hypothetical

solution for treating racist utterances as latent-strategic actions within the framework of Habermas's theory of communication.

1. Introduction of the Concept of Strategic Action by Habermas and its Modification

The main aim of Habermas's theory of communicative action is to defend communicative rationality, as distinguished from purposive rationality, which Max Weber considered the most developed stage of reason. Specifically, it is to establish and analyze the concept of "communicative action," which is oriented toward mutual understanding, as distinguished from success-oriented "strategic action" (Habermas 1984, p. 285). Habermas achieves this by drawing on Austin's distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. In other words, he develops an explanation that refers to speech act theory by positioning perlocutionary acts as a strategic action and illocutionary acts as belonging to the communicative action.

According to Austin, illocutionary acts are doing something "in saying something" and perlocutionary acts are doing something "by saying something" (Austin 1962, p. 94). The most important difference between the two is that illocutionary acts are given effect by convention, whereas perlocutionary acts are not. The reason we are guaranteed to make a promise by uttering "I will definitely come tomorrow" is that there is a convention about promises. On the other hand, even if this utterance pleases the hearer, it is not by convention (at least, there is no convention that the hearer is to be pleased when this type of utterance is made), and the hearer may be disappointed depending on the situation. In short, what a perlocutionary act brings about varies between cases. More precisely, the various perlocutionary effects produced by an utterance are first identified, and then the corresponding action is attributed to the speaker (cf. Gu 1993, p. 406).

Austin's main reason for introducing this distinction seems to have been to exclude what is not an illocutionary act in advance of his analysis of illocutionary acts by going into word-by-word differences. Therefore, he did not establish further subcategories of perlocutionary acts or consider them in detail, and he was satisfied with the vague but sufficient criterion for his purposes—conventional or not—with respect to the distinction between them and illocutionary acts. On the other hand, although Habermas's main object of interest was communicative action, he was not satisfied with the vague criterion of conventional or non-conventional with respect to the distinction between it and strategic

action. Above all, Habermas emphasized the social-act aspect of communication, or in other words, the mutual action of speaker and hearer. He was convinced that a distinction must be made between the binding effect of illocutionary acts on both the speaker and hearer and perlocutionary effects. He offered an alternative that he laid out from Strawson's argument because he believed that Austin's criteria could not adequately account for such aspects.

Strawson contended that not all illocutionary acts are necessarily conventional in the ordinary sense. For example, the illocutionary act of warning "The ice over there is very thin" is not based on firm conventions, unlike the illocutionary act of promising, naming, or pronouncing a judgment. In this case, the speaker needs to secure uptaking the illocutionary act they intend to perform (cf. Strawson 1964, pp. 122-123). From this, Strawson draws the following conclusions:

> [T]he illocutionary force of an utterance is essentially something that is intended to be understood. And the understanding of the force of an utterance in all cases involves recognizing what may be called broadly an audience-directed intention and recognizing it as wholly overt, as intended to be recognized. (Strawson 1964, p. 129)

This is a statement of the essential features of illocutionary acts, or the conditions under which illocutionary acts are established, and says nothing about perlocutionary acts. For Strawson and Austin, perlocution was a secondary concern. However, Habermas applied it as the criterion by which the two were to be distinguished.

> A speaker, if he wants to be successful, may not let his perlocutionary aims be known, whereas illocutionary aims can be achieved only through being expressed. Illocutions are expressed openly; perlocutions may not be "admitted" as such. [...] Perlocutionary acts constitute a subclass of teleological actions which must be carried out by means of speech acts, under the condition that the actor does not declare or admit to his aims as such. (Habermas, 1984, p. 292)

Under this new criterion, perlocutionary acts are positioned as a special class of strategic interaction. In this case, the illocutionary act is a means to achieve a perlocutionary aim. Even as a mere means, however, the illocutionary intention must be understood by the

hearer for the illocutionary act to take place, while the perlocutionary intention must not be known.

> This proviso lends to perlocutions the peculiarly asymmetrical character of concealed strategic actions. These are interactions in which at least one of the participants is acting strategically, while he deceives other participants regarding the fact that he is not satisfying the presuppositions under which illocutionary aims can normally be achieved. (Habermas 1984, p. 294)

The specific instance he envisions is the act of deceiving the opponent. However, according to this criterion, only the act of using an illocutionary act to deceive or outwit the opponent can be a perlocutionary act. In other words, perlocution requires the establishment of illocution in the context of teleological action. In Habermas's view, communicative action is the "original mode of language use" and strategic action is "parasitic" (Habermas 1984, p. 288)[1)].

However, this new criterion narrows the domain of perlocution more than Austin had in mind. For example, Austin argues that the perlocutionary act may be either the achievement of a perlocutionary object or production of an accidental or unintended perlocutionary sequel (cf. Austin 1962, p. 118). Since Habermas assumes only a context of teleological action, bringing about unintended subsequent things would not be the strategic action itself, even if it could be a failure of the strategic action.

However, the more important issue is that the case of making explicit the intention to a perlocutionary object in the context of teleological action and then achieving the goal on that basis can also be considered an entirely commonplace case. Habermas himself was forced to admit to the following statement in the subsequent section after analyzing the illocution of simple imperatives using the famous concepts of three validity claims, namely

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1) In connection with this claim by Habermas (also called the "priority thesis" (Niemi 2005, pp. 526–527)), many criticisms have been made, for instance, that the original nature of communicative action and the parasitic nature of strategic action are not well grounded in it (cf. e.g. Skjei 1985, pp. 90–96; Cooke 1994, pp. 23–25; Nussbaum 1998, pp. 132–140), that it unduly underestimates the rationality of strategic action (cf. e.g. Johnson 1991, pp. 188–191; Chriss 1995, pp. 555–557), or it failed to distinguish the two clearly in the first place (cf. e.g. Cooren 2000, pp. 300–303), and so on. The present paper does not enter into these debates, but points out the necessity of reorganizing or extending his theory of communicative action, including his priority thesis, on the premise that it is fundamentally valid, through considering racist and fictional discourses.

of truth, rightness, and truthfulness.

> Simple imperatives are illocutionary acts with which the speaker openly declares his aim of influencing the decisions of his opposite number, and in so doing has to base the success of his power claim on supplementary sanctions. Thus with genuine imperatives—requests and demands that lack normative authorization—speakers can unreservedly pursue illocutionary aims and nonetheless act with an orientation to success rather than understanding. (Habermas, 1984, p. 305)

The sanctions referred to here are those produced by a real-life power relationship (e.g., an intimidating order from a supervisor) or violence (e.g., a bank robbery with a gun demanding money), whereby the hearer is deprived of the possibility of a response in normal communicative interaction such as demanding a justification. In this sense, this is not a communicative action but a kind of strategic action. However, it cannot be denied that Habermas's explanation here is ambiguous.

Later, Habermas (especially after the exchanges between Skjei [1985] and Habermas [1985b]) divided the category of strategic acts into "latent-strategic action" and "manifest strategic action." With this, the earlier mention of simple imperatives is now formally transferred from the realm of communicative action to the realm of strategic action. This type of utterance no longer performs the illocutionary act (and thus, the normal validity claims) even as a means to an end.

> In manifest-strategic action, the speech acts (weakened in terms of illocutionary force) abandon the role of coordinating action, leaving this to forms of influence external to language. Stripped in this manner of its force, language only fulfills such information functions as remain once communication is deprived of consensus-forming functions, and once the validity of utterances can only be inferred from symptoms. [...] Threats are examples for speech acts that [...] have forfeited their illocutionary force and only borrow an illocutionary meaning from other contexts of application in which normally the same sentences are expressed with an orientation toward reaching understanding. (Habermas 1994, p. 55)

On the other hand, since Habermas corresponded strategic action to perlocutionary

acts, if the framework of strategic action is modified, that of perlocutionary acts cannot be unmodified as well. Therefore, he assumes that all goals and results or effects that go beyond the understanding and acceptance of speech acts under the heading of illocutionary goals and success are perlocutionary. For example, when the speaker *S* (communicatively) demands that hearer *H* give money to *Y*, it is an illocutionary success for them if *H* understands the grammatical meaning of *S*'s utterance and the illocutionary act and to accept the demand. However, it is a perlocutionary effect if *H* actually gives money to *Y*, thus pleasing the latter's wife. Those are then the perlocutionary effects brought by the corresponding perlocutionary acts. However, if *S* was going to prepare for the robbery with *Y* with the money *Y* received, then that is also a perlocutionary act (cf. Habermas 1994, pp. 52-53). Unlike the manifest act, the latent-strategic action cannot succeed unless the illocutionary act is established in a pseudo or illegitimate way to exert a binding effect. Hence, the speaker must conceal from his hearer that his illocutionary act is a means to achieve some perlocutionary goal and act as if it is not. Still, "the latent-strategic use of language lives parasitically off normal linguistic usage" (Habermas 1994, p. 53).

Of course, this amendment would cause Habermas's criterion for distinguishing illocutionary acts from perlocutionary acts—that is, whether the intention must be known or not—to be reassessed for its status. This is because in a manifest strategic action, the perlocutionary intention is known to the listener. Thus, Habermas's original criterion no longer serves as a criterion for distinguishing perlocutionary from illocutionary acts. Nevertheless, it may be useful for making explicit the distinction between latent and manifest strategic actions, and is still a condition to be met for illocutionary acts. This distinction also provides useful insights into the place of racist discourse in communication, among other things.

2. Racist Utterances and Pretending Communicative Action

Note: This section contains several direct quotations of racist expressions against American people of African descent. Although the author quotes them with the purpose of criticizing them, they still have the potential to make the reader feel uncomfortable and revive wounds from the past. Thus, skip this section if it is better for you.

In general, racist utterances should be classified as a strategic action rather than a

communicative action. Then, if Habermas's distinction of manifest/latent is valid, it must also apply to racist utterances, which it does. Actual racist speech may manifest in the sense Habermas means, or it may be made latently.

Habermas identifies threats as typical of manifest strategic action; however, there are also insults. In the case of insults, which Habermas mentions very briefly, it is also possible to achieve a perlocutionary goal in the act of utterance that goes beyond the understanding of the content of the speech already in the speech act (cf. Habermas 1994, p. 56). This is also true for racist utterances, especially for explicit hate speech. Let us begin our discussion with this group.

The so-called N-word, if it is not a quotation, a fictional utterance, or a joke[2], can already achieve the perlocutionary effect of explicitly discriminating against a race by the utterance act (or information function) alone. Alternatively, certain word combinations or the use of words in certain contexts may be discriminatory. Donald Trump reportedly made the following remark about immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries during a meeting in the Oval Office on January 11, 2018.

(1) Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here? (Dawsey 2018)

This appears to be either a direct illocutionary act of questioning or an utterance that performs an "indirect directive" (Searle 1979, p. 36) speech act. However, even if this could be a question as a communicative action or an indirect directive to consider specific measures, it would still be speech that discriminates against immigrants from the pre-nominated countries by virtue of their place of origin. In other words, independent of whether this utterance is any kind of illocutionary act or even an illocutionary act, a particular perlocutionary effect can be produced solely by the utterance act in the context in question. Since Trump denies the content of this statement (cf. Kenny 2018), it is possible that he did not make such a statement. However, if he did, then it was an act of hate as a perlocutionary act made by an act of utterance, and responsibility for the consequences must be attributed to the actor.

On the other hand, racist utterances can also be akin to threats. If someone makes the

2) In fact, I believe that the same perlocutionary effect can be produced to varying degrees, even if it is a quotation, a fictional utterance or a joke, but I cannot enter into it in this paper.

following utterance directly to people of a particular race X, it is blatant racism and the speaker should be strongly condemned.

(2) Why are you Xs here? Get out!

This utterance is discriminatory and differs from (1) because unlike (1), the content of this utterance does not seem to contain discriminatory vocabulary. Rather, this utterance is discriminatory because it is a one-sided command given to a particular race X. When this utterance is used in a racist context, it would mean "Get out! Otherwise...." In other words, it is a manifest strategic act that can be understood as analogous to the threat "Hands up! Otherwise...." with guns by bank robbers.

The classic example of a manifest strategic action as envisioned by Habermas is such an utterance directed at the party concerned. However, as in the case of the latent-strategic utterance, "Give the money to Y," it seems there may be cases where manifest strategic action has a third party other than the party as their hearer. For example, in the same meeting as in (1), Trump reportedly also said the following.

(3) Why do we need more Haitians? [...] Take them out. (Dawsey 2018)

If this utterance was actually made, it would have been a slightly different kind of racist utterance, albeit one that belonged to the same group as (2). This is because as far as it was alleged to have been made in the Oval Office, the utterance was not directed at the people from Haiti. However, this is why it can be said that the people of Haitian origin are not given room to refute it, even though they are the parties involved. In addition, the perlocutionary intent to exclude them is exposed. Moreover, this utterance came when Trump suggested a one-sided end to the Temporary Protected Status program for people of Haitian origin, and thus carried the force of sanction that Habermas mentioned or "the if-then structure of the threat which casts claims to power in the place of the validity claim presupposed in communicative action" (Habermas 1994, p. 55). Hence, even though this statement is made to a third party, it is an example of the manifest strategic action that is not substantially different from the case of "Get out! Otherwise...," which is directly addressed to the parties involved.

However, racist statements are not always manifest or overt. More often, these

statements are made as a latent-strategic act and seem harmful. Let us take Trump's remarks again.

(4) I am happy to inform all of the people living their Suburban Lifestyle Dream that you will no longer be bothered or financially hurt by having low-income housing built in your neighborhood... Your housing prices will go up based on the market, and crime will go down. I have rescinded the Obama-Biden AFFH Rule. (cf. Wilkie 2020)

If we understand "inform" which occurs in this utterance as a performative verb, it would be a descriptive or constative utterance that carries out the illocutionary act of report. In effect, however, this statement appears to be an assertion that what is said in the that clause is attributed to repeal the Obama-Biden era Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rules. In other words, the argument seems to be about economic and social policies that would result in building no low-income housing in the suburbs, thereby increasing the market price of housing and lowering the crime rate. However, in reality, this is not the point of this utterance. It is well known that since World War II it has been primarily the white middle class that has built housing in the suburbs, and that many of the people who have been able to build low-income housing in the suburbs with the help of AFFH rules in recent years have been immigrants. In this context, therefore, this utterance should have at least the following perlocutionary effects: (a) The association of immigrants with images of criminals; (b) the feelings of immigrants are hurt; (c) middle-class residents who meet the conditions are tempted into a commitment to racism; and (d) those who are already racist are pleased. Moreover, they result in (e) reinforcing existing prejudices and fostering racial fragmentation. Therefore, these perlocutionary acts should be attributed to Trump by the above utterance. In addition, (c) and (d) would not be unrelated to the fact that the presidential election was close. Thus, if he actually intended any one of (a)–(e) (and as a hearer, we have to judge that he did), this is not a communicative action in which he would have made only an assertion about economic and social policies in truthfulness with which he would have undertaken the obligation to justify it with evidence in the rebuttal about justification aiming at rational consensus. In short, (4) is a latent-strategic utterance.

Such utterances are parasitic to communicative action or communicative reason in

Habermas's sense, just as pseudoscience uses and is parasitic to our trust in science[3]. They are made as if they were sincere communicative actions and claims worthy of a subject for discussion while they are not. In this sense, latent-strategic racist statements are in the nature of *role-playing* or *pretending*.

It is difficult to consider this character of "pretending" in any further detail solely within the framework of Habermas's theory of strategic action. Rather, I will seek a clue from the analysis of speech act theory, especially from Searle's theory of fiction. This is because Searle understands fiction as "pretend" illocutionary acts. According to Searle, fictional utterances including the presentation of fictional works, should not be considered the performance of a special illocutionary act (e.g., "story-telling"), which would indicate that the content of the utterance is fictional. Rather, fiction is to pretend to make assertions. Searle makes an important distinction between the two meanings of the word "pretend."

> In one sense of "pretend", to pretend to be or to do something that one is not doing is to engage in a form of deception, but in the second sense of "pretend", to pretend to do or be something is to engage in a performance which is as if one were doing or being the thing and is without any intent to deceive. If I pretend to be Nixon in order to fool the Secret Service into letting me into the White House, I am pretending in the first sense; if I pretend to be Nixon as part of a game of charades, it is pretending in the second sense. (Searle 1979, p. 65)

The second meaning is problematic in fiction. We would like to understand the first meaning analogically with fiction as a variant or similar category, but let us first look at Searle's discussion of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction.

Searle lists the rules that the illocutionary act of assertion must follow, arguing that it is "a set of horizontal conventions that break the connections established by the vertical rules" (Searle 1979, p. 66). His main concern is "what makes it possible for an author to use words literally and yet not be committed in accordance with the rules that attach to the literal meaning of those words" (Searle 1979, p. 67). Thus, he details the mechanisms by which horizontal conventions work with specific examples, but does not address the question of what specific conventions are included in these horizontal conventions.

3) As mentioned, I am proceeding with the assumption that the "priority thesis" of communicative action is correct.

Perhaps he believes it varies between communities or contexts of conversation. However, regardless of the actual contents of the horizontal convention, "it is the performance of the utterance act with the intention of invoking the horizontal conventions that constitutes the pretended performance of the illocutionary act" (Searle 1979, p. 68). Therefore, there are two ways to pretend the illocutionary act can be accomplished: while conveying the intention to invoke the horizontal convention to the listener, or while hiding it.

By the way, there is an oddity in Searle's theory of fiction, namely that he does not mention the perlocutionary dimension at all while discussing the subject. We can only infer the reason for this from what he states, but it may have something to do with his attempt to defend the importance of an "author's intention" in fiction. He states:

> There used to be a school of literary critics who thought one should not consider the intentions of the author when examining a work of fiction. Perhaps there is some level of intention at which this extraordinary view is plausible; perhaps *one should not consider an author's ulterior motives when analyzing his work*, but at the most basic level it is absurd to suppose a critic can completely ignore the intentions of the author, since *even so much as to identify a text as a novel, a poem, or even as a text is already to make a claim about the author's intentions*. (Searle 1979, p. 66, emphasis mine)

Here, Searle distinguishes between the author's intentions about what semantic content the work contains and the author's intentions about it being a fictional text, reserving attitudes about the former and insisting on the importance of the latter. The former intention is questionable, perhaps because it is often "ulterior" and requires *interpretation* by readers including critics to become publicly acknowledged. The content of the interpretation or appreciation experience cannot be determined by the author's second intention, namely that it is a fiction and an object of interpretation or viewing; in other words, the intention to invoke the horizontal conventions.

This point can likely be understood as follows. In Searle's view, the invocation of a horizontal convention is made *in* utterances rather than *by* utterances. In this sense, it still belongs to the illocutionary dimension, and if the speaker's intention to invoke it is not conveyed, the speech will fail as a fiction. The reader will have his own interpretation or appreciation of the speech; however, in this process, the author's intention about the

contents does not have priority, nor does the listener have the freedom to create them. Rather, it is a process of hermeneutic fusion of horizons, or a process of "participation in make-believe."[4] However, this process cannot arise without a fictional utterance by the author. As such, this process is a result of the author's utterance and belongs to the perlocutionary dimension. Searle does not refer here to the perlocutionary effects of fiction, probably because it was a matter of no such importance to him, which could only be asked after the question of importance to himself was answered: "How is fictional utterance possible?" Even if he does not refer to the perlocutionary dimension of fiction, he would not assume that this dimension does not exist in the case of fiction.

I would like to incorporate the above understanding of fiction by Searle to move forward with my discussion of racism utterances. To clarify, I am not trying to reduce racist utterances to fiction. In general, racist utterances and fiction are two different things. The racist statement as a type of fiction may underestimate the perlocutionary harm it causes and relieves the speaker of the responsibility she is supposed to bear. Even so, it seems that the most useful way to consider the parasitic nature of racist utterances is to consider it as a kind of pretend act. As noted above, the case of latent-strategic racist utterances should be considered the first of the two meanings of pretend listed by Searle, that is, an act done with the intention to deceive. I name this act the *quasi-fictional speech act*, as it is not the usual constative illocutionary act of assertion, but also does not have the intention of invoking the horizontal conventions in mutual understanding with the other party. It is a latent-strategic action of pretending to carry out an illocutionary act, parasitic on communicative action as a means of achieving a perlocutionary aim, with the intention of deceiving the hearer.

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4) Kendall Walton suggests that we understand fiction as a kind of "make-believe." If the props of the game are made by the author, we obtain some insight into the author's inner life. However, the author does not have to be there. Important is that we have agreed that something is a prop (even if it is a chain of rocks or a cloud), and based on this, we (as viewers) participate in the game. Walton criticizes Searle's theory of fiction, perhaps because Walton has a broader view of fiction than Searle (cf. Walton 1990, pp. 75–89). If we limit our subject matter to fictional works of language art or similar works of fiction in which there is an author (or an interpreter who identifies something as a work of fiction), and if we consider the perlocutionary dimension of the listener's interpretation of speech, it seems possible to understand both theories consistently, although I cannot argue this here.

3. Rethinking Habermas's "Dramaturgical Action"

Putting Habermas's entire theory of communication into perspective, we can seemingly go further in considering the pretending character of quasi-fictional racist utterances. This is because a category of "dramaturgical action" exists in Habermas's classification of human action that he has left unexplored. Of course, not everything dramaturgical is fictional, and not all fiction may be dramaturgical. However, there seems to be much overlap, and it is natural to assume an internal relationship between these categories as they are both creative activities distinct from non-fictional speech acts made with affirmative speech. However, there is a major obstacle in this direction. Habermas classifies dramaturgical action, supposedly including fictional speech, as communicative rather than strategic action. While the illocutionary dimension is most important for communicative action, for strategic action, the perlocutionary dimension is essential. Since quasi-fictional utterances are strategic, it is their perlocutionary effect that should matter, the perlocutionary aim of achieving it, and the perlocutionary intention to actually achieve it (or at least, try to). As seen above, this is not necessarily inconsistent with Searle's theory of fiction; however, if we try to simply connect this argument to Habermas's dramaturgical action, we will have a serious category mistake.

Nevertheless, as in the example of "give money to *Y*" discussed in the previous section, Habermas acknowledges that in his later position, various perlocutionary effects can also be produced by locutionary and illocutionary acts, and that only the non-public, hidden perlocutionary intentions that are parasitic on illocutionary acts are problematic. In other words, he believes that truthful communicative action can also produce a variety of perlocutionary effects, and that perlocutionary goals and intentions that are made public do not affect the outcome (e.g., just pleasing *Y*'s wife without further intentions) and are harmless (cf. Cooke 1994, p. 23). Therefore, it might be possible to update Habermas's theory of dramaturgical action to match his updated theory of communicative and strategic actions, though Habermas does not discuss it. First, let us examine how he positioned dramaturgical action.

Habermas categorizes human actions according to two distinctions: success-oriented or understanding-oriented, and the other as social and language-mediated or not. Communicative action, which is understanding-oriented as well as social and language-mediated, consists of three "pure types," namely conversation, normatively

regulated action, and dramaturgical action. These correspond to three types of speech acts: constative speech acts (which carry the truth claim), regulative speech acts (the rightness claim), and expressive speech acts (the truthfulness claim) (cf. Habermas 1984, p. 329; Johnson 1991, pp. 183–184). To avoid misunderstanding, it should be emphasized that any speech as a communicative action makes all three of these validity claims simultaneously, and any of them can be rejected by the hearer (cf. Habermas 1984, pp. 307; Habermas 1994, pp. 59-60). However, it is possible to make such a typology depending on which of the validity claims of truth, legitimacy, and truthfulness are focused on (cf. Habermas 1984, p. 308). Thus, dramaturgical action is an action that in general should be taken primarily as an expressive speech act with the truthfulness claim, even if it has other aspects. For "expressive speech acts," Habermas gives the following definition, a revision of Searle's version:

> With expressive speech acts the speaker refers to something in his subjective world, and in such a way that he would like to reveal to a public an experience to which he has privileged access. The negation of such an utterance means that *H* doubts the claim to sincerity of self-representation raised by *S*. (Habermas 1984, p. 326)

The concept of the dramaturgical act was adopted from Erving Goffman's sociological theory (cf. Habermas 1985, p. 163) and does not necessarily relate solely to art. Nonetheless, as the name suggests, the most typical dramaturgical act continues to be the act of producing a work of art. Artworks reflect the author's subjective desires and emotional attitudes as well as his own interpretation of the value standard that underlies them as exemplars (cf. Habermas 1984, p. 334). In addition, the author has the privilege to determine the extent to which they are reflected in individual dramaturgical acts.

> Every actor can control public access to the sphere of his own intentions, thoughts, attitudes, desires, feelings etc., to which he alone has privileged access. In dramaturgical action, participants make use of this and steer their interaction by regulating mutual access to their own subjectivities. (Habermas 1985a, p. 158)

Habermas's expressionist view of art as described above may seem naive or outdated if we look at how broad the range of contemporary art has become since the beginning of

the twentieth century. However, this view of art is a consequence of his ideas about *Moderne*. He believes that as an avant-garde, the aim of modernism is the constant renewal of culture to bring the unfinished project of modernity closer to completion. "The project aims at a differentiated relinking of modern culture with an everyday praxis that still depends on vital heritages, but would be impoverished through mere traditionalism" (Habermas 1981, p. 13). In contrast, a movement that totalizes art and sees every object as a (potential) work of art will only accelerate the cultural poverty of everyday praxis, but it will not contribute to cultural renewal. This is precisely the failure experienced by surrealists.

> Communication processes need a cultural tradition covering all spheres—cognitivemoral-practical and expressive. A rationalized everyday life, therefore, could hardly be saved from cultural impoverishment through breaking open a single cultural sphere—art—and so providing access to just one of the specialized knowledge complexes. (Habermas 1981, pp. 10-11)

Therefore, the act of creating or performing contemporary art must (a) position existing cultural traditions as obsolete, (b) propose a new standard of value to replace them, and (c) contribute to their incorporation into the mutual praxis of existing daily communicative action. Strategic actions that rely on perlocutionary effects, such as deviation from or destruction of existing values and provocation through them, cannot accomplish this (c) task. This seems to be the background to the fact that dramaturgical action is positioned as a communicative action[5].

With the above background in mind, let us examine whether quasi-fictional racist utterances can be understood in terms of Habermas's dramaturgical acts. First, based on the modifications he made to strategic action, we can assume that the expressive speech act made as a dramaturgical act also entails perlocutionary effects[6]. In the case of

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5) It is perplexing for me, but Duvenage (2003) and other studies of Habermas's view on aesthetics, as far as I can see, all ignore the category of dramaturgical action.

6) Chriss (1995) argues that from Goffman's viewpoint, Habermas's communication theory is overly rationalistic, and since the communicative action is oriented toward achieving the goal of understanding, the distinction between the orientation of success and understanding is also over-specification (cf. Chriss 1995, pp. 555-557). The modification of Habermas's notion of dramaturgical action may allow for a certain response to this point.

ordinary dramaturgical action performed through expressive speech acts, even if they are literally indistinguishable from illocutionary acts of the assertion or constative type, they are utterances expressing something in one's subjective world to the hearer, and the speaker's truthfulness claim is the primary validity claim of the utterance. The illocutionary intention of the utterance must be understood by the hearer. If the hearer successfully understands it to be a subjective expression by the speaker and accepts or rejects its truthfulness claim, then it is an illocutionary success. However, the hearer has a specific appreciation experience of the specific process that results from it, that is, the content of the expression (e.g., the work of art). This appreciation experience can be said to be a perlocutionary effect through which interpretations and evaluations are determined. This is analogous to the fact that *H*'s understanding and consent to the utterance of the request to "give money to *Y*" is an illocutionary success, and what *H* thereby undertakes is a normative illocutionary binding effect, whereas the actual giving of money by *H* to *Y* and the pleasure of *Y* and his wife is a perlocutionary effect. Now, to what extent is this framework compatible with Searle's theory?

Let us take a concrete example: When Louisa May Alcott describes the life of Jo March, a fictional character, in *Little Women*, the writing style is constative. However, the title, binding, information about the author, how the publisher introduces the book, position of the book in the bookstores, and description of the setting and the characters in the book, and so on are all organized to signal to the reader that the book is fiction. This is common to Searle's fictional theory. However, from here on, it is different. If this is a dramaturgical act, then the reader will judge the truthfulness of the work as an expressive utterance as a whole, that is, Alcott's sincerity to the reader regarding her expressed attitude to the value standard that underlies the work. If Alcott held the value that marriage was not the end-all-be-all of female happiness, yet made Jo get married to sell the novel, thereby expressing values that glorify marriage, then under the condition that readers and critics have access to information about Alcott's own ideas, there is reason to reject its truthfulness claim[7)].

To rephrase the situation in Searle's terms, unlike fiction in general, in the case of dramaturgical action, among the vertical rules whose normal operation is to be suspended

7) The 2019 film by Greta Gerwig, which portrays Jo as the author and lets her tell the story of this process by herself, could be seen as an attempt to restore the truthfulness of the original work. For this example, I am indebted to Nayuta Miki.

by the invocation of horizontal conventions (cf. Searle 1979, p. 67), at least the sincerity rule must be maintained. Rather, the connection between language and reality established by the sincerity rule, which must be broken to pretend something, is the point of dramaturgical fiction. However, this means that what is meant by the category of dramaturgical action is incompatible with Searle's theory of fiction.

Habermas's idea that dramaturgical action is carried out through the act of an expressive speech act (and not a pretension of it) is also consistent with this conclusion. In the dramaturgical act, as Habermas puts it, the element of role-playing or pretending is clearly not essential (though strange in the sense of the words). If we consider that the novel Alcott writes expresses her own view of women, her truthful claim is genuine, and yet the truth claim being made at the same time is only pretended, then we might say that the author is *playing the role* of the speaker who performs a constative speech within which the truth claim is made. However, this is *not* what Habermas wanted to say by establishing the category of dramaturgical action. As mentioned, as long as the speech is communicative, even such speech can be rejected with respect to the truth claim. If the place and time period that Alcott describes as the setting for her novel is so ridiculous as to be incomparable to reality, then it is possible that her own view on women she is trying to express in the work is also assumed irrelevant to real women. However, this means a rejection of the truth claim, meaning that the truth claim has actually been made. Ultimately, fiction in Searle's sense does not seem to find a proper place in Habermas's theory of communication, even though it is clear that fiction in the sense of Searle exists as part of our linguistic activity.

Finally, as a way out of this impasse, I would like to propose a hypothetical interpretation, albeit a brief suggestion. I propose a new kind of communicative action, *one in which the main focus is on the truth claim and in which the truthfulness claim is relegated to the background*. If the main focus of the dramaturgical expressive speech is on the truthfulness claim and the truth claim is relegated to the background, then this new category would be symmetrical to it[8]. I believe we can recapture fiction in Searle's sense as such with the necessary modifications. In this case, a simple explanation can be given that to "pretend" is to not make the truthfulness claim. To not make the truthfulness claim could mean that one does not intend to respond to the rejection of the claim by the

8) I am indebted to discussion with Yasuyuki Funaba for clarifying the symmetricity between them.

hearer. Quasi-fictional utterances can be understood as a variant of this category. However, while fictional utterances are communicative acts in which the hearer must be made to understand the illocutionary intention of not making the truthfulness claim, quasi-fictional utterances are latent-strategic actions in which the hearer must be made to believe that the speaker is making a truthfulness claim. Although this type of utterance resembles fictional utterances in mechanism, it differs significantly from ordinary fictional utterances because it is parasitic to communicative action, which should be complete with the three validity claims. This type of utterance invades our communicative action sequences under the guise of proper discourse. However, as Habermas notes, such utterances can achieve their non-public perlocutionary goals only if they succeed in forcing the illocutionary binding effect in an "illegitimate" way. Therefore, "latent-strategic action fails as soon as the addressee discovers that the counterpart has only seemingly abandoned his egocentric orientation toward success" (Habermas 1994, pp. 53–54). In this view, to argue against a latent-racist utterance regarding its truth could be committed to legitimizing an illegitimate illocutionary binding effect. For example, we should not insist on arguing against Trump's utterances (4) that the *factual basis* of the claim is wrong in an economic and social policy sense, though Wilkie (2020) is actually doing it. This is because facts can be contested in terms of how they should be found and recognized. By contesting the facts, the failure to make a truthfulness claim, which means that the utterance is not legible for argumentative discourses from the first point, ceases to be an essential issue. Thus, racist strategic utterances obtain their place in our daily praxis of communicative action. Habermas argues that a student's rejection of the truthfulness claim in response to a professor's request—"Please bring me a glass of water"—means, for example: "No, you really only want to put me in a bad light in front of the other seminar participants" (Habermas 1984, p. 306) as a response. I believe that the attitude of refusing to respond to a rejection of the truthfulness claim is one of consistently repeating, "I do not have such an intention," "That is not the point," or even "You are running away from the debate," in response to such a rejection when trying to contest the facts. The important thing to do when racist utterances are made in this way is not to dispute the facts, but to continue to expose the hidden racist perlocutionary goals behind them and to establish that the speaker has no intention of responding to the rejection of the truthfulness claim. She is not then performing a mutual communicative action with the hearer, that is, that she intruded on the debate in an illegitimate way from the beginning

to colonialize the rational, argumentative, and communicational discourse.

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This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP19K12923.

Racist Utterances as Quasi-fictional: Rethinking Habermas's Theory of Strategic and Dramaturgical Actions

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Summary

In this paper, I argue that from the standpoint of Habermas's theory of communication, racist utterances can be regarded as a kind of fictional utterance. This is because both are utterances in which the main purpose is the realization of the perlocutionary effect, while they do not have illocutionary acts as normal utterances. It is clear, however, that reducing racist speech to fiction is inappropriate and misdirected. Fiction is still communicative in the sense Habermas means, whereas racist utterances are latent-strategic action, and fundamentally different in that respect. However, I argue that racist utterances are similar to fiction because they are disguised as communicative action, and in that sense, can be regarded as quasi-fictional utterances. As a clue to developing this argument, this paper will examine Searle's theory of fiction. Following Habermas's framework of communication theory, fiction seems at first glance to be an utterance that should belong to dramaturgical action. However, because the element of role-playing is rare in expressive speech acts as dramaturgical action, fiction in the sense that Searle refers to has no proper place in Habermas's theory of communication. Therefore, at the end of this paper, I propose a solution, albeit a hypothetical one that posits a new type of utterance within the framework of the theory of communicative action and paves the way for further critical consideration of racist utterances.

The discussion in this paper proceeds as follows. First, I will review the introduction of the position of strategic acts in Habermas's theory of communicative action and its modification by Habermas himself, returning to Austin's theory of linguistic action as well. Next, I will attempt to connect with Searle's theory of fiction, which focuses on the pretention of illocutionary acts, by illustrating several actual racist utterances as strategic action. I will then rethink Habermas's theory of dramaturgical action, argue that this category is incompatible with the type of fictionality that is the subject matter at hand, and suggest a hypothetical solution for treating racist utterances as latent-strategic actions within the framework of Habermas's theory of communication.